GLADSTONE ELECTRONIC SUPPLY CO. LTD., 1736 AVENUE ROAD, TORONTO, ONT. M5M 3Y7
(416) 787-1448

Information for ZX81 Kit Builders

PLEASE READ IN FULL BEFORE BUILDING KIT

We at Gladstone Electronics thank you and congratulate you on your purchase of the Sinclair ZX81 computer kit. If you have waited longer than anticipated for delivery, we also thank you for your patience. We think you'll agree that the high quality and value of the ZX81 has justified the wait. Please read this letter and the instructions supplied with the kit before you begin assembly.

If, after examining the kit, you would prefer an assembled kit, please return the kit to us, unbuilt in original condition with $50.00 (Plus $5.00 for shipping) and request an assembled ZX81 (Ontario residents add $3.50 Sales Tax).

ZX81 Kit Warranty

If your ZX81 Kit fails to operate correctly upon completion you may return it for service, accompanied by a certified cheque or money order for $30.00 (which includes $25.00 flat rate for repair and $5.00 shipping). If in our opinion the kit has failed to operate due to a defective component(s), $25.00 will be returned to you with the repaired unit. We regret however that we cannot start repairs without this remittance. Please note that you must also include a copy of your invoice and an explanation of the problem.

There are however some conditions which we cannot repair at the above rates. These exceptions are:

1. Kits that have been constructed using solder other than standard electronic (60/40 preferred) and other than resin core. NEVER use an acid core type of solder. A very thin guage of solder is recommended.

2. Kits in which the circuit board has been subjected to an excessive amount of heat such that the tracks on the board have been lifted. (This will not occur if the soldering iron used is as recommended in the instructions, the tip is kept clean and the iron is not held against the board for more time than it takes to make a proper connection).

3. Kits in which any part of the modulator has been altered or removed, or kits in which the builder has attempted his own repairs and did not exercise proper servicing techniques; thus leaving a very time consuming clean-up of the circuit board for our technician, before we can even begin trouble-shooting.

   The service fee charged for the above conditions is $55.00 (which includes $5.00 shipping). The same terms of payment apply. (At this point you'd be paying the same price as an assembled unit).

   When returning the kit, we require the entire computer (not just the circuit board) fully constructed. Please do not send the power supply or other accessories, unless you believe they are related to the problem.

Tips on Building Your Kit

As we have now released a great many kits across Canada, our technical department has been able to note the most frequent problems and questions from builders. We are most pleased to pass this information along so that you may make a note of it while you are assembling your kit. The major reasons kits fail to operate, listed by the frequency of occurrence are:

1. Instructions are not followed properly. We suggest if you take your time and follow the instructions carefully, the kit will function the first time and forever. So please read, understand and use the instructions well, as they have been very carefully written.

2. The first thing our technicians do when repairing a ZX81 Kit is to inspect the quality of the soldering done by the builder. They are looking for cold solder joints, solder bridges (blobs) and improperly placed components. By removing excessive solder and touching up what looks to be questionable solder joints (which can be identified as the ones that don't shine ... usually caused by a dirty soldering tip not allowing enough heat), over 75% of all computers are repaired at this point with no further work involved. So as you can see, a good clean soldering job will almost certainly guarantee you success and give your ZX81 a long life.

3. The parts most commonly installed incorrectly are:

   i) Resistor packs installed backwards or reversed. If after reading this you realize this was your error, please do not try to correct the packs yourself unless you have proper de-soldering tools, techniques and knowledge. Return the kit to us for repair, rather than risk damaging the circuit board.

   ii) Capacitor C3 installed backwards (check Figure 6).

   iii) Heat sink not tightened. This can cause overheating and may result in intermittent operation.

   iv) I.C. sockets not mounted flat to the circuit board.

   v) Keyboard ribbon cable bent too sharply or broken. The ribbon is delicate, so exercise care when inserting into connectors. If it doesn't fit into the connector initially, do not force or bend it, try putting something small and thin (like a guitar pick) behind it and ease it gently into the connector.)

   For your general information, the success rate of kits is remarkably high and we believe it is the most successful kit we have ever marketed.

The ZX81 is not a difficult kit to construct. All parts included with the kit have been fully tested. On occasion we do encounter a kit which has failed to operate as a result of a defective component supplied, but this is extremely rare.

There is only one further point that we would like to mention, a question that is frequently asked concerning the video modulator. The ZX81 kit supplied in Canada (unless otherwise noted) operates on the UHF band of the TV, about channel 36. Adjust your UHF dial and fine tuning to locate the exact spot on your TV. It is of course attached through the TV's UHF antenna terminals (not the VHF). The video modulator supplied uses UK1 and UK2 and inputs. R30 is listed as optional and not supplied with the kit. You may add this part to the kit and will get a slightly improved video image on your TV, although the ZX81 will operate perfectly well without it.

Parts Shortage/Damages

Please check all parts against the parts list before building the kit. If there are parts missing, please advise us in writing of the parts required. If any parts are damaged in transit you must return same to us in condition received. Claims for shortages or damage must be made within five days. Be sure to enclose a copy of your invoice/bill of sale to avoid delay.

We Are Approachable

Please feel free to contact us at any time with questions, problems, or comments you may have. You will get the best results if you put your comments in writing to us, c/o "Computer Dept.", rather than via telephone, as we would like to take as much time as is necessary to research any information you may require, and not be compelled to give instant answers over the phone. But if you find it necessary to contact us, whatever the means, we shall do our best to assist you.

We again thank you for your purchase of the ZX81 Personal Computer Kit from Gladstone Electronics. Welcome to the world of computers and thank you for your interest in our products.

.....